

# JUVENILE PREVENTION



# Juvenile Prevention Services



**Phil Kader**, Prevention Services Manager, in charge of the Youth Challenge Community Program. The Youth Challenge Community Program consists of three Deputy Probation Officers, one Accountant, and one Program Technician.



**David Gonzales**, Prevention Services Manager, in charge of the Students Targeted with Opportunities for Prevention. The Students Targeted with Opportunities for Prevention Program consists of four Deputy Probation Officers, one Staff Analyst, one Accountant, one Program Technician, and one Office Assistant.

The Juvenile Prevention Services (JPS) team has been positioned under the direct control of the Office of the Chief. JPS is a combination of the Challenge Grant II funded Youth Challenge Community Program and the Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act funded Students Targeted with Opportunities for Prevention. Both of these programs have given Probation the opportunity to coordinate a collaborative effort that includes Deputy Probation Officers, Children and Family Services Social Workers, Police Officers, school staff and contracted community based organizations. These are school site based programs whose mission is to provide prevention and early intervention services to 10 – 14 year old, at-risk youth and their families. It is also designed to gauge the effectiveness of those interventions in reducing the number of school related problems, juvenile delinquency, substance and alcohol abuse, family dysfunction, and gang involvement.

Juvenile Prevention Services utilizes a relationship-based wrap around approach to the family strength-based interventions at the seven sites. The school site collaboration of all the agencies provide the youth and their families the necessary tools to positively impact the behavior that led to the referral to the program. The goal is to reduce the risk factors that increase the likelihood of involvement in the juvenile justice system. By collaborating with other government agencies, schools, and most importantly the community, there is a unified effort to intervene early in a youth's life. Utilizing all the tools offered within the neighborhoods served also enhances the opportunity for the services to directly respond to the needs of the individual communities.

# Youth Challenge Community Program (Y.C.P.P.)

The California Board of Corrections awarded the Probation Department a 3.2 million-dollar grant to implement the Youth Challenge Community Program (YCCP) in 1999.

Since this is a demonstration project, the school sites were selected so a broad cross section of youth in our county could be evaluated and compared. The significantly different settings will also help develop an understanding of how best to serve the unique needs in each community. The rural sites include McCabe Elementary and McCabe Middle School in Mendota and Firebaugh Middle School in Firebaugh. The suburban sites are Garfield Elementary and Alta Sierra Middle School in Clovis, and the urban sites are Webster Elementary and Tehipite Middle School in Fresno.

YCCP uses a true experimental design that assigns youth into either the experimental or control group. The youth and their families in the experimental group will receive all the identified elements of the project, while the control group will receive no direct services. This allows for a verifiable evaluation as to the benefit of the efforts and the value of the YCCP model. Process and outcome measurements are being collected to evaluate the effectiveness of the methodology and results of the program.

YCCP became operational on the selected school sites in January 2000. Since that date over 498 youth have been referred to the program. The data collected indicates that YCCP youth are missing school less, doing much better academically and have had less school suspensions and expulsions. There is also promising data suggesting that siblings and parents are benefiting from the services.

In October 2001, Probation Services Manager (PSM) Kader presented a workshop on the Fresno County Probation Juvenile Crime Prevention Model at the National Association of Counsel for Children Conference in San Diego. In January 2002 he presented the Model at the National Community Sentencing Association Conference in San Francisco. In February 2002, Chief Price, Dr. Mel Hamel of the California School of Professional Psychology and PSM Kader presented the Model at the American Probation and Parole Winter Conference in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. In April 2002, PSM Kader also presented the model at the Federal Probation and Presentence Officers Association's National Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada.



# Students Targeted with Opportunity for Prevention

The Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act is the legislation that awards funding to probation departments throughout the state to develop prevention and early intervention programs. Fresno County received 2.7 million dollars to continue the implementation of the Students Targeted with Opportunities for Prevention Program (STOP).

The school based program uses selected school sites based on needs developed through the Fresno County Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council. There was a strong need demonstrated for prevention services in the rural areas. Therefore, three rural school sites and one urban site were selected. These different settings developed an understanding of how to best serve the unique needs in each community. The rural sites include Parlier Middle School, Brelectic Elementary, Cesar E. Chavez Elementary and Martinez Elementary in Parlier, Caruthers Elementary, and Huron Middle School. The Urban site is located at Sequoia Middle School in Fresno.

The STOP program uses a variety of relationship-based programs to interact with students at each site. Through a strong mentoring program, sound responsible adult relationships have developed, thus strengthening the student's overall support system. This approach has increased student's self-esteem, which has resulted in better grades, attendance, and behavior in school.

The STOP program served over 278 students and families in its' first year of operation. The Board of Supervisors renewed and approved the contracts with the community-based organizations on April 23, 2002.